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SUBJECT: IIG SUGGESTS IRAQI GUARDS FOR SADDAM HUSSEIN

Classified by Deputy Chief of Mission James Jeffrey for
Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (S) SUMMARY. Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) Barham Salih has suggested introducing Iraqi personnel to the inner circle of guards watching over Saddam Hussein. The DPM proposed the switch in security personnel in the context of his broader expressed interest in destabilizing the temperament of the former Iraqi leader prior to trial. Deputy Commanding General for Detainee Operations Major General Geoffrey Miller expressed skepticism privately as to the advisability of this approach. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (S) At a September 13 meeting attended by Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) Barham Salih, Deputy Commanding General for Detainee Operations Major General Geoffrey Miller, Greg Kehoe of the Regime Crimes Liaison Office, and PolMilOff, DPM Salih noted that current MultiNational Force-Iraq (MNF-I) detention practices pertaining to Saddam Hussein were designed to "keep [Hussein] in a stable condition," and expressed his concern that keeping Saddam "too stable" was "not a good idea."

¶3. (S) The DPM noted that, when he visited Saddam in his prison cell at Camp Cropper the previous week, Saddam appeared to react with anger to the presence of Iraqis in the prison and that, "from his hands," one could see that Saddam was "controlling himself in rage." The DPM said that he and Prime Minister Allawi agreed that changing Saddam's inner circle of guards (presently staffed by MNF-I) to an all-Iraqi guard might provoke a useful reaction from Saddam and proposed that he identify ten "highly professional" Iraqi candidates for these positions.

¶4. (S) MG Miller said he thought MNF-I and the IIG "could do this" and agreed that selecting "the right kind" of guards would, in this instance, be crucial. He pointed out that Saddam was a "frustrating" person with whom to deal, being a "very angry" and "fragile" man, and that any guard force, MNF-I or Iraqi, should follow current procedures regarding regular duty rotations and a no-weapons policy for the innermost circle of guards.

¶5. (S) The DPM also expressed the opinion that Saddam should be brought to trial in a prison uniform or jumpsuit. When it was noted that it is usual practice in Iraqi courts for defendants to appear in dress suits, usually brought to jailed defendants by their families prior to trial, the DPM conceded the point and agreed that standard procedure should be followed.

¶6. (S) MG Miller remarked that, based on prior experience, the application of handcuffs on the day of the trial was in itself likely to destabilize Saddam. He also stated that it was important that the court scene "appear professional" and stressed that, contrary to the DPM's concerns, he believed it would be difficult to prevent Saddam from

becoming "too agitated" as his trial date approached.

17. (S) After the meeting, MG Miller privately expressed the opinion that MNF-I and IIG strategy should instead focus on maintaining Saddam at maximum mental stability for trial. He agreed that some Iraqi participation in guard duty was possible but suggested that this would be better introduced on a more limited level, perhaps with one Iraqi guard paired with an MNF-I guard in two-man teams. No additional visits by IIG officials to Saddam in prison are scheduled until after Saddam's expected recovery from upcoming hernia surgery in October, which will be performed at Ibn Sina hospital inside the International Zone on September 17.

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